



# Durham City Freemen



## Drapers' Guild

# *DURHAM CITY FREEMEN*

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# *DRAPERS' GUILD*

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## Foreword

In 2016 the 'Freemen' established a History Group and embarked on a project to explore the history and heritage of their 8 remaining guilds/companies, using a wide range of archive material, together with artefacts discovered and recovered from the bed of the River Wear beneath Elvet Bridge, by Gary Bankhead. The group comprised of both 'Freemen' and local people who had an interest and passion for the heritage of their city.

Their work does not purport to be an academic study, but has been created for the general public, with the aim of shedding light on the history of the guilds/companies, sustaining the heritage of the Durham City Freemen for future generations.

The trade guilds/companies and Freemen held power and influence and did much to shape the city and its heritage for over 300 years.

I hope you find the work of the History Group both interesting and informative.

Eric Bulmer  
Chairman of the History Group

## **Acknowledgements**

With grateful thanks to the members of the History Group and in particular, to Eileen Leatherland, Sharon Dunn and Kathleen Vasey for their major contribution in researching the Drapers Guild.

The creation and production of this booklet could not have been achieved without the support of Liz Bregazzi, County Records Office, Chris Caple and Gemma Lewis of the Archaeology Department, Durham University, Francis Gotto from the Palace Green Library and Gary Bankhead, for his guidance and access to artefacts he discovered and recovered from the bed of the River Wear beneath Elvet Bridge.

Finally, special thanks must go to Geoff Kitson the official photographer of the Freemen for providing images and John Booth, the Warden of the Butchers' Company and Freemen website manager, who assembled the research material for the production of this booklet.

## Introduction

The guilds or companies of Durham City stretch back over 500 years and this year marks the special anniversary of the Butchers Company that was recognised with its right to trade in 1520.

There were historically 3 main types of guilds in the Middle Ages, merchant guilds, craft guilds and religious guilds, but only the craft guilds have survived. In medieval times groups of skilled craftsmen in the same trade formed themselves into guilds. A guild would ensure anything made by its members was up to standard and sold at a fair price.

The first Charter (granted to the citizens in 1179 by Bishop Hugh Pudsey) granting the citizens to be ‘free from’ in-tolls and out-tolls for their merchandise, hence the term ‘freemen’. The first recorded Charter granted to a guild was the Weavers and Websters in 1450 and by the late 15th century there were 16 guilds in Durham.

The two primary concerns for the guilds were with the trades, where they endeavoured to maintain standards of workmanship (now known as quality control) and keep a local monopoly of the trade for their own members, by control of the admission of apprentices.

An apprentice to a guild was trained by a guild member, who would expect to be paid for this by the boy’s parents. An apprentice could live with his master for up to 14 years, but seven

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years was more common. The ultimate certification as a 'master of their craft' was the production of a 'masterpiece' at the end of his apprenticeship. Once an apprenticeship was over, the young person became a 'journeyman'. A journeyman continued to learn his craft but from different masters and was now paid.

All charters stipulated certain rules known as 'Ordinaries'. Common to all guilds was that, "*they must take part in the celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi*" (1st Thursday after Trinity Sunday). The guilds, with their banners displayed, went in procession from the Market Place to Palace Green, where they enacted religious plays.

Another Ordinary stated that, "*no guild would permit a Scotsman to be an apprentice*", no doubt a reaction to the continuing conflict with our northern neighbour. This rule no longer applies.

## Original 16 Guilds

The object of Guilds was to maintain high standards of workmanship through apprenticeships, and to engender good fellowship in society and religion. The following 16 Guilds were established in Durham:

Weavers & Websters (1450)

Cordwainers (1458)

Barber Surgeons, Waxmakers, Ropers and Stringers (1468)

Skinners and Glovers (1507)

Butchers (1520)

Goldsmiths, Plumbers, Pewterers, Potters, Painters, Glaziers and Tin Plate Workers (1532)

Barkers and Tanners (1547)

Drapers and Tailors (1549)

Merchants incorporating Grocers (1345), Mercers (1393),

Salters (1394), Ironmongers (1464) and Haberdashers (1467) (1561)

Fullers and Feltmakers (1565)

Curriers and Tallow Chandlers (1570)

Free Masons, Rough Masons, Wallers, Slaters, Paviours, Plasterers and Bricklayers (1594)

Blacksmiths, Lorimers, Locksmiths, Cutlers, Bladesmiths and Girdlers (1610)

Saddlers and Upholsterers (1659)

Carpenters, Joiners, Wheelwrights, Sawyers and Coopers (1661)

Dyers and Listers (1667)

Of these only the Barbers, Butchers, Cordwainers, Curriers, Drapers, Joiners, Masons and Plumbers survive.



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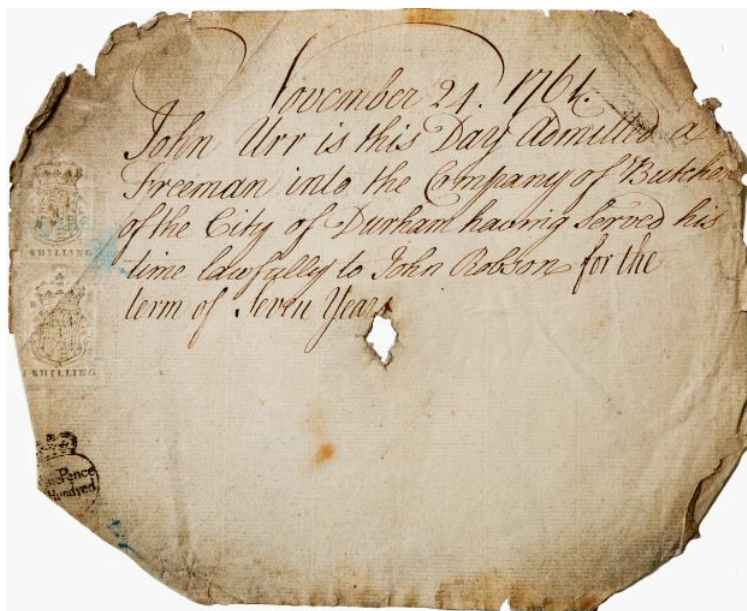
### Early Admission as a Freeman

Initially, freedom (to become a Freeman) could only be obtained in two ways either by Servitude or Patrimony.

#### Servitude

Serving a 7 year apprenticeship (now only 3 years).

This was usually confirmed in a deed (written contract) by which an apprentice was bound by indenture to a master. Once he had completed his apprenticeship he was admitted to the Company/Guild of his craft.



*Document dated November 24th 1761 confirming John Urr's admission as a Freeman into the Company of Butcher's after serving a seven year apprenticeship to John Robinson.*

DURHAM CITY FREEMEN

**HIS INDENTURE** made the *20th* <sup>Year</sup> Day of *June* 1799  
 in the *29th* Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord *George the Third* by the Grace of God of Great-Britain, France and Ireland King - Defender of the Faith, &c. And in the Year of our LORD, One Thousand, Seven Hundred, and Ninety nine

BETWEEN *John Nelson of the City of Durham in the County of Durham Butcher and Seller of Sundry Sorts of Sundry Goods* of the One Part, and *William Dixon of that City in the said County of Durham* of the Other Part: WITNESSETH, That the said *John Nelson* hath of his own Free Will, and with the Consent of his Father *John Put and Ronald Nelson* self Apprentice, to and with the said *John Nelson* the Master of the said Apprentice to Duell, Roman, and Serve, from the *day of the date hereof* for seven Years thence next following, as fully expressed and Enacted. Doing all which Terms and Conditions the said Apprentice hath

the said *John Nelson* shall not do, or Consent to be done, but to his *Power* shall let it, and forthwith his *and Master* thereof warn: Taverns, or Ale-houses, &c. shall not Haunt or frequent, unless it be about his *Masters* Business there to be done: At Dice, Cards, Tables, Bowls, or any other unwholesome Games he shall not Play: The Goods of his *said Master* shall not waste, nor them Lend, or give to any Person without his *Master's* Licence Matrimony with any *Woman* within the Term shall not contract, nor from his *Masters* Service at any Time absent himself, but as a True and Faithful Apprentice, shall Order and behave himself towards his *said Master* and all as well in Words as in Deeds, during the said Term: And a true and just Account of all his *said Masters* Goods, Chattels, and Money committed to his *Charge*, or which shall come to his *Hands*, faithfully he shall give at all Times when thereunto required by his *said Master* his Executors, Administration, or Assigns. And the said *John Nelson*

for his self, his Executors, Administration, and Assigns, Covenant, Promise and Grant by these Presents, to and with the said *William Dixon the Father and* his *Executors, Administration, or Assigns*, shall and will Teach, *John Nelson* the said Apprentice, or cause him to be Taught, Learned, and Informed in the Trade *of a Butcher* now used after the best Manner of Knowledge that he or they may or can, with all Circumstances thereto belonging: And also shall find, provide, to and fit *the said apprentice, maintenance and encouragement* during the said Term

And for the true Performance of All and Singular the Covenants, and Agreements, each of the Parties aforesaid do bind themselves unto the other in the special Seal of their Hands, each of lawful Memory of Great Britain

firmly by these Presents, in Witness whereof, the Parties aforesaid to their perfect Indentures, interchangeably here set their Hands and Seals, the day and Year above-written.

The Indenture, Covenant, and Conditions, in all here Done the Day it is executed, and what Money or other Thing is given or contracted for with the Clerk or Apprentice, shall be indented in Words or Length) and the Duty paid to the Stamp-Office, &c. in Lawes, or within the Writing Bills of Mortality, within One Month after the Execution; and if in the County, and out of the Bills of Mortality, within Two Months, on a Discharge of the Stamp or the Seal; otherwise the Indenture will be null, the Males and Males within City Walls, and neither Party, and the Apprentice be obliged to follow his Trade or to make this.

*John Nelson*  
*William Dixon*  
*Philip Milton*  
*Robert Dixon*

Signed Sealed and delivered by  
*John Nelson*  
 in the presence of  
*William Dixon*

Robert Dixon Indenture 20th June 1799  
 Indentured Apprentice to John Nelson (Butcher of Gilesgate  
 near Durham for seven years.)

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### **Patrimony**

Conferred on the eldest son of a Freeman (today all sons and since 2010, daughters can also be admitted).

### **Customary Freedom**

Occasionally individuals (who do not qualify as above) are invited to become Freemen whose influence on behalf of the guilds is worth having.

During medieval times and until 1835, the Freemen had authority and power. They were the only citizens that could vote for or be elected as Mayor. The Great Reform Act (1832) and the Municipal Corporation Act (1835) extended electoral franchise, removing the power of the Freemen overnight.

Although stripped of their authority, the Freemen have retained three historical privileges;

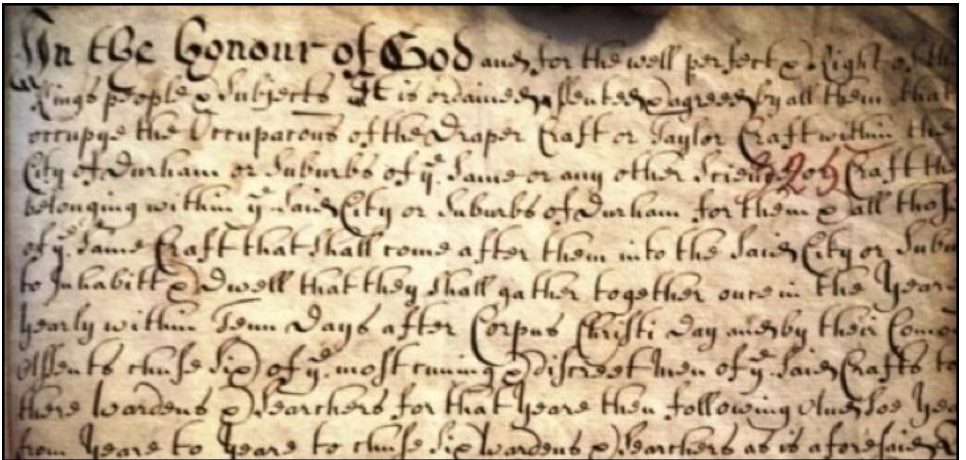
- To erect a stall in the marketplace free of charge.
- To graze their livestock on the Sands.
- The use of the Guildhall free of charge.

The functions of the Freemen and guilds today are largely ceremonial, notwithstanding their continuing support for the community and charitable causes.

## The Initial Charter

From late medieval days, individual craft groups or ‘mysteries’ formed companies to organise, oversee and manage their trade. These companies evolved to become powerful ‘guilds’. The most influential of these were the Livery Guilds of London, one of which was the ‘Drapers’, another being the ‘Tailors’.

There is evidence in records of the Drapers Company that, in 1180, there was an informal trade group of London Drapers but the first Royal Charter was not granted until 1364. As with other trades, the regulation of the Company was necessary for the protection of their profession. In order to enable the Drapers to control their own trade, the Guild received, in 1438, its Charter of Incorporation.



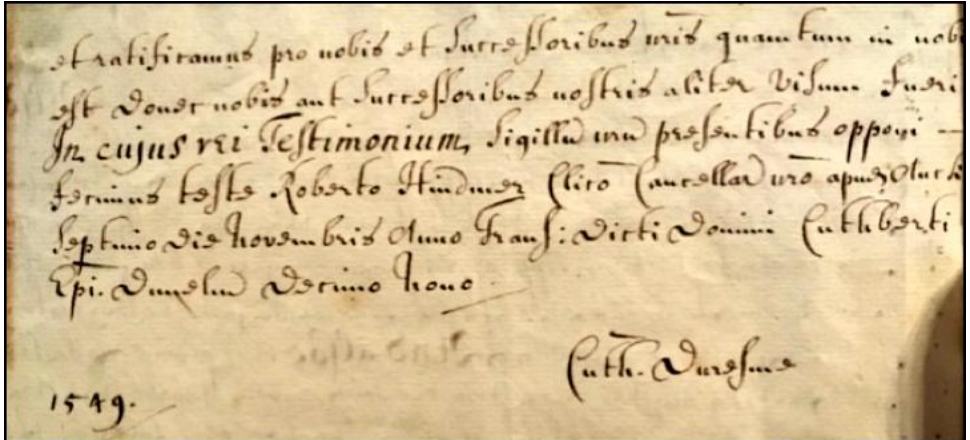
1. 'Drapers and Tailors Charter 1549

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The Tailors, by 1300, had also founded a fraternity, their first Charter was granted in 1327 followed by the Incorporation Charter in 1408 when they were known as the Company of Tailors and Linen-Armourers. In 1503, due to commercial development, they became the Company of Merchant Taylors.

Evidence of the combined Durham Guild of the Drapers and Tailors is found in their Charter, which was granted by the Bishop Tunstall in 1549. (Figures 1 and 2). This document laid out the rules, known as Ordinaries, to be strictly followed by the membership of Freemen. These Ordinaries were, on occasions, updated with amendments to the initial Charter.



2. Bishop Tunstall signature.

### The Ordinaries

Most craft fraternities of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were associated with a religious house. The London Drapers were attached to the church of St Mary Bethlehem in Bishopsgate, (The Drapers Company, 2018). The Tailors, however, were not associated with any parish church but were known as the Fraternity of John the Baptist (Davies, 1994, p.7).

The Charter of Incorporation aimed at a strict control of the trade and laid out the rules, known as Ordinaries, to be strictly followed by the membership of Freemen. These Ordinaries were, on occasions, updated with amendments to the initial Charter and included claiming *‘the right to search for defective goods and to supervise workers, particularly aliens and other immigrants’* (Davis, 1994, p.9).

The Charter of 1549 was very specific in its Ordinaries for the behaviour of the Guild, including the penalties for disobeying a rule, for example, *‘For Obedience to the Warden and Other Officers’*, Forfeit 8d and *‘Against speaking without License’*, Forfeit 8d.

### Structure of the Company

In the early years, the two Guilds were very different. Most craft fraternities of the 13th and 14th centuries were associated with a religious house.

The Tailors were more prestigious and offered social advantages derived from an influential and wealthy membership. Despite the Drapers emphasis on the skill of their craft, many joined the Tailors to enjoy these benefits and, initially, the two Guilds cooperated. However, during the fourteenth century considerable tension between the Drapers and the Tailors developed due to factors which included the increasing access to international markets and the '*indiscriminate sale of cloth*'. (Herbert, 1834, p.425), by participants of several other trades.

With little available documentation, the history of the Drapers and the Tailors companies in the City of Durham is difficult to define. We know that, before 1480 there was 'Companye of Drapers Taylors' who, upon occasion had used the banner of St Cuthbert with the arms of the London guild of Merchant Tailors and Drapers. References in the Crossgate Borough court records to Wardens of the '*tailyourcraft*' enforcing their control of the trade in 1502, 1505 and 1509 suggest that the Tailors Company were independent before their alliance with the Drapers Company in the 17th century.

### The Coat of Arms of the Drapers and Taylors

Prior to the 1549 Charter, the two companies had individual Coats of Arms (Figure 3), the Drapers' Coat of Arms was originally awarded in 1439. In honour of the Virgin and Mother Mary. In 1561, the design was modified with the helm and crest, the golden ram and supporting lions.



3. Drapers Coat of Arms  
Photo: The Drapers Company 2018



4. Taylors Coat of Arms

The Taylors' Coat of Arms (figure 4), was awarded in 1481; this modified version was granted in 1586. It shows the lion above a pavilion, with two mantles, symbols of the trade of a tailor. Two camels support the crest, the holy lamb representing the religious origins of the company.



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After the amalgamation of the Guilds, the two Coats of Arms were combined to become one heraldic design which is still in use today. Note the lion and the camel supporting the Arms of the two Guilds. (figure 5).

This present Coat of Arms of the 'Drapers and Tailors', is displayed in the Guild Hall, it is signed by the Wardens and Stewards and dated 1783, and shows the motto of the Tailors which, translated means, '*with harmony small things grow, while with discord the mightiest are ruined*'.



*5 Drapers and Tailors Coat of Arms  
displayed in the Guild Hall, Durham City*

### **The Guild within the Context of that Period in History**

After the rebellion in 1069 by the North of England, to William the Conqueror's attempt to take over Durham, his revenge was to plunder the lands and massacre the peasants. In order to control the city, in 1072, the Normans built the castle, followed in 1093 by the Cathedral created by the Norman Bishop.

The Castle and the Cathedral were imposingly sited in the centre of the town, on the peninsula formed by the bend in the River Wear. As the town began to expand during the 12th to 14th centuries, the areas or Boroughs called St. Giles, the Bishops Borough and Elvet developed.

The Bishop, who was given the title Prince Bishop, had been endowed with limited special powers to control the town. When, in 1538 Henry VIII destroyed the Shrine of St Cuthbert and with it, the attraction of the town as a pilgrimage, he also removed some of those powers. However, the Prince Bishop was still able in 1565, to create a Corporation of Mayor and Aldermen, drawn from the Freemen of the City.

The Freemen represented the several crafts and trades that supported the industrial activity of Durham. Most important was the woollen trade, the weavers, dyers, fullers, spinners and drapers. This was followed by the leatherworkers including the tanners, the saddlers and the cordwainers.

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The Medieval cloth trade involved several skills during the process of wool to garment. These were controlled by the merchant who bought large quantities of wool, it would then be handled by the spinners, dyers and finishers before being passed to the tailors, the drapers or the mercers who may, or may not, have been clothiers.

To separate the trades of Draper and Tailor is not simple; research has revealed an ambiguity of definition. Census documents show that individual Durham Freemen describe themselves as 'Draper', others as 'Tailor', some as 'Draper and Tailor', one even as 'Tailor and bonesetter'. Although it is possible that while being a Tailor was a specific craft, the Draper had a business in which he may have been, also, a merchant for other goods. Similarly, the mercer may have dealt in cloth, hence the trades overlapped.

### The Nature and Work of that Period in Time

Within the guild structure was a hierarchy of masters, journeymen and apprentices. A Master Tailor/Draper would take a boy into his home for between seven and ten years and train him in his craft. The apprentice then became a journeyman who could obtain paid employment with another Master before, if he was competent, becoming a Master himself. During his time of training, the apprentice was bound to the Master. Immediately upon the completion of his term of servitude he could seek admittance as a Freeman of the Company and of the City. He would '*demand his freedom*' from the Master, become a Freeman and was free to trade within the City.

Eldest sons of Freemen upon reaching 21 years of age, could gain their freedom by patrimony without serving a term of apprenticeship.

In the Mercers' Company and, also for a period, in the Drapers', any son of a Freeman could gain his freedom in this way.

The Guild was a source of welfare for both its members and also the wider community, offering a social life of meals and activities.

Although few women were accepted as Freemen, they did play an active part in support of their husband's business or in social activities, celebrations or festivals. Funerals were an important element in the responsibilities and rituals of the Guilds offering financial and social support to the family.

### **Fundamental Changes over Time**

The Norman Conquest had stimulated international commerce which demanded, a previously absent, regulation of transactions and protection of trade. The reign of Henry 1 (1100-35), saw the introduction of the 'Gild Merchant'. This was an association with judicial powers, initiated by means of a Royal Charter. By the 13<sup>th</sup> century every town had a merchant guild; Durham was granted this power during the reign of Henry 11.

Members of the 'Gild Merchant' were allowed to trade freely, therefore had the Freedom of the town. In many boroughs this Membership and Freedom was obtained by being a Master Craftsman.

As the Guilds developed and became more powerful, their system and structure varied from town to town. Some Guilds were amalgamated and could include several trades, variable from town to town. In Durham, there were, at one time, 16 trade guilds which included the Drapers and, separately, the Tailors, but evidence of when and why they amalgamated is absent.

## **Families of Freemen within the Guild/Company**

Durham County Record Office and the University of Durham Library Special Collections hold documentation which refers to the Freemen and Apprentices of Guilds working in the City during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The Drapers list of Freemen shows over 160 names of Admissions to the Guild between 1722 and 1852. This includes over eighty multiple family names such as, Atkinson, Crofton, Lee, Swalwell and Wilson, showing evidence of several generations of Freemen and Apprentices, those who were accepted through Servitude and others through Patrimony.

However, not all were Drapers. Some had been admitted as having completed their servitude but others claimed their right to admission through patrimony. Two families that were very involved with the profession and its administration were those of Binks and Vasey.

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### **Binks**

Simon Binks, born in 1757 was the start of a lineage which was to establish a prestigious family business of drapers in Durham in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. A Freeman of the Drapers Guild, he was a partner within Binks and Lampson, based in Sadler Street. He married Catherine Storey in 1776 and his son, Christopher, was born in 1777. Simon died in 1817, followed by his wife in 1823. She passed on the business to her son's widow, Elizabeth and former foreman, John Caldcleugh. After the death of John Caldcleugh in 1825, the business was passed to Elizabeth's son, Matthew, born 1804, and the name changed to Elizabeth Binks and Son.

John Caldcleugh's widow, Jane, continued her share of the business with the help of her brother-in-law Peter Caldcleugh. This, also, was based in Sadler Street.

According to a Durham newspaper article of May 1829 (Figure 6), Peter Caldcleugh was very active in obtaining quality fashions in London and had opened a connection in the capital with a principal Robemaker to supply vestments to the clergy. With increased prestige, by 1834 the company became cap and robe makers to Durham University, founded in 1832.

No. 182

**OR, GENERAL**

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**A POLITICAL, LITERARY, CO.**

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THE MOST EXTENSIVELY CIRCULATED

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<p>in consequence W BINKS, beg Public, that the NKS and SON, ed on under the</p> <p><b>AIR.</b></p> <p>air gratitude for ir hope that these e every exertion</p> <p>firm, having been ith the assistance be conducted to</p> <p>has recently ac- of the principal NS, and a Selec- S for the present</p> <p><b>RS.</b></p> <p>fy, as HOUSE- who understands</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>J. CALDCLEUGH &amp; CO.,</b> <b>WOOLLEN DRAPERS AND TAILORS,</b> <b>HEAD OF ELVET BRIDGE, DURHAM,</b></p> <p><b>R</b>ESPECTFULLY inform their Friends and the Public, that P. CALDCLEUGH has just returned from LON- DON, where he has been to ascertain the present FASHIONS, and where he has purchased an extensive supply of Goods, of the first quality, suitable for the season.</p> <p>J. C. and Co. avail themselves of this opportunity of expres- sing their grateful thanks for the liberal support they have re- ceived since their commencement in Business, and of assuring their Friends that their constant endeavours will be used to give entire satisfaction to those who may favor them with their commands.</p> <p>LADIES' HABITS and CHILDREN'S DRESSES made plain and ornamented.</p> <p>A variety of Gentlemen's SILK STOCKINGS, BRACES, HAMBURCHIEFS, &amp;c.—Durham, May 14, 1829.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE MISSES FLINTOFF</b></p> <p><b>B</b>E G leave to inform the Ladies of Durham and its Vicinity, that they have just received from some of the first houses in LONDON, a Fashionable Assortment of MIL- LINERY, DRESSES, LEGHORN &amp; TUSCAN STRAW</p>	<p><b>T</b>HE 1 the u been new South Bai command Wear.</p> <p>The pre between th The</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>DURHAM</b> (to wit.)</p>
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6. From Durham Chronicle.(1829)

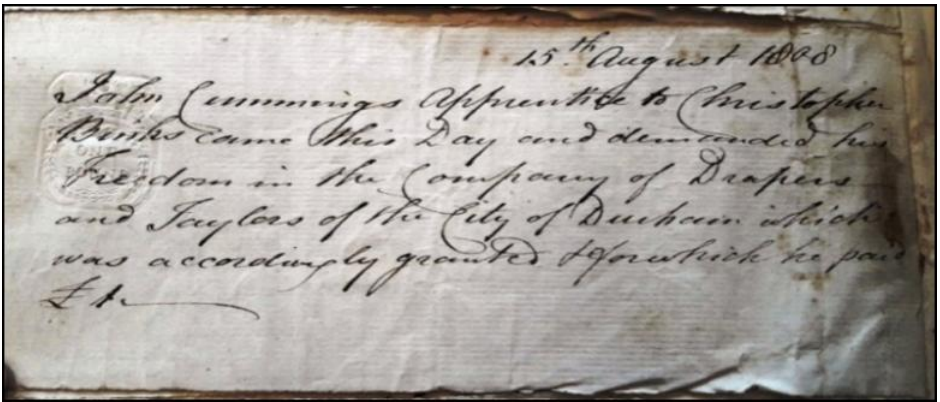
J. Caldcleugh & Co. advertised their premises as ‘Head of Elvet Bridge’. Meanwhile, according to Slaters Directory, 1848, Peter Caldcleugh was trading from 79 New Elvet, James Telfair and Sons from 58 Sadler Street and a relative of the Binks family, Simon Binks Tilly was established in Wanlass Lane. In the 1871 Census, Thomas Vasey and his family are shown to have been living at 31 Framwellgate.



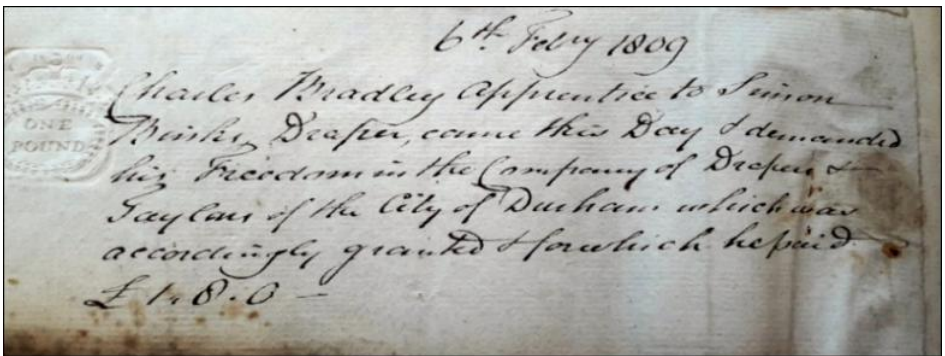
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The Palace Green Library, Durham, holds an extensive collection of original Freedom Notes relating to the release of Apprentices from their Masters on completion of their apprenticeships. The notes below (Figures 7 and 8), show apprentice John Cummings claiming his Freedom from Christopher Binks in 1808 and, similarly, Charles Bradley from Simon Binks in 1809.



7. Freedom notes, 'John Cummings' (1808)



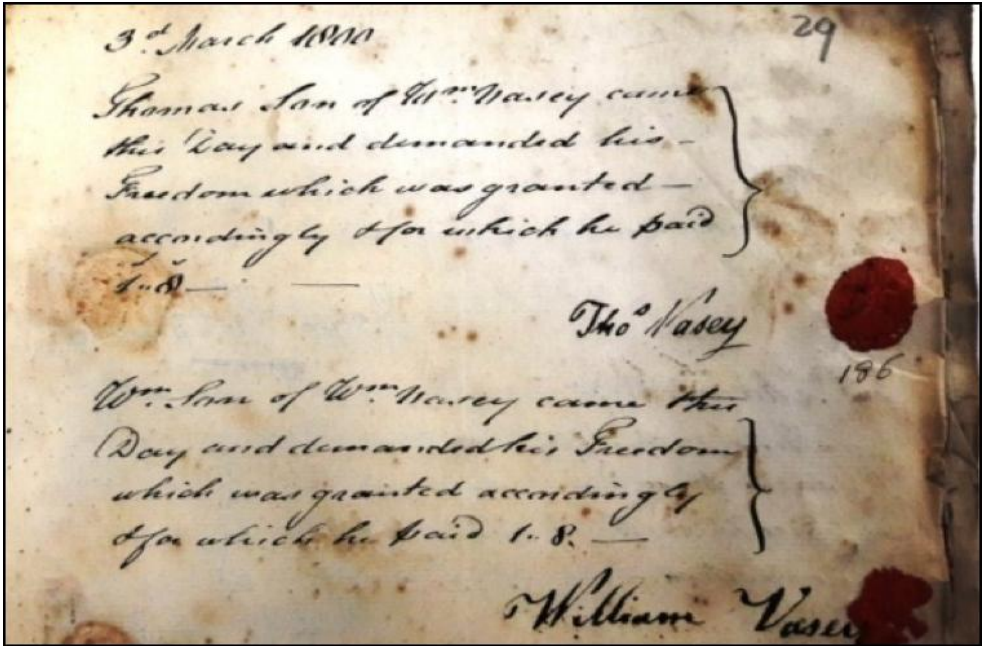
8. Freedom note, 'Charles Bradley' (1809)

## Vasey

Census documents and Ancestry Records show that members of the Vasey family lived and carried out their profession of Tailor/Draper in the City of Durham since the mid 1700's. The earliest reference found is that of a Thomas Vasey who was born in 1714, married Isobel Richardson in 1743 and, together, had five children. One of his sons, William, who was born in 1750, became Warden of the Drapers and Tailors Guild his signature is seen on the joint Coat of Arms dated 1783.

William's marriage to Ann Anderson produced five children, three of whom were tailors. Thomas was born in 1778, William 1778, Ralph, 1781 and Robert, 1786; they all became Freeman through patrimony.

Freedom notes of Thomas and William and signed by them, are dated 3 March 1800 (Figure 9). The subsequent generation of Thomas Vasey saw two of his sons, William born in 1812 and Robert in 1817 continuing the family tradition, with Robert's son, Thomas Blagdon (b. 1842), becoming a prominent Freeman of the Tailor's Guild. Within the Vasey family, of the eleven Freeman admissions listed, only one was through servitude, all others were via patrimony. Where we have been able to ascertain trades from the Census documents, we learn that brothers, Thomas (b.1814) and James (b. 1823) were painters while John (b. 1818) was a bookbinder.



9. Freedom notes. Thomas Vasey and William Vasey (1800)

## **Tools and Equipment used within the Craft**

Tailors, drapers and related trades were not ranked within the groups of high wealth trades. Research revealed very few documents relating to their wills during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. There is little inventorial evidence for items of the trade being passed on to beneficiaries. Tailors, especially, needed few tools, such as shears, pins and pressing equipment. Although drapers may have held a wider range of goods, such as cloth, these materials would, no doubt, remain in the business to be continued by another family member. However, in the probate records of Durham City draper Thomas Hall dated 1586, his will, inventory and probate account give an informative insight into the possessions of his trade.

The comprehensive list with a value of £112.4s.10d shows items of furniture, of household use, his horses and equipment relating to his trade.

The value of his many items of ‘clothe’ totalled £51.17s.9d (Figure 10) and included large quantities of silk, broad cloth, kersey (coarse narrow cloth), check, linen, harden (hard fabric made from flax) and cotton.

While we have been unable to trace this family of Thomas Hall, we do know from the Freeman Admissions List 1722-1852 (University of Durham) that in 1789, another Thomas who was the eldest son of John Hall became a Freeman through patrimony. Six other family members are listed showing involvement with the business of drapery in Durham until the mid 19th century.

A note of all the clothe.			
	li	s	d
12 yeardes of selke russed	2	3	4
8 yeardes ¼ of golde in bokes att 6 <sup>s</sup> a yearde the holle ys	2	9	6
12 yeardes of fazante couller	2	13	4
1 yearde & ½ of browne blowe	0	11	0
3 yeardes & ½ of brode graye	0	8	0
2 yeardes and ½ of brode skye couller	0	12	0
12 yeardes of selke russed att	2	0	0
9 yeardes of brode sheppes couller att 8 <sup>s</sup> the yearde	3	12	0
4 yeardes of brode grene att 7 <sup>s</sup> a yearde the holle ys	1	8	0
5 yeardes of selke russed att 3 <sup>s</sup> 8 <sup>d</sup> a yearde the holles ys	0	18	4
9 yeardes & ½ of fazante couller att 4 <sup>s</sup> 4 <sup>d</sup> a yearde all ys	2	1	2
1 yearde & ½ of course graye the pryse	0	4	0
3 yeardes of brode reade the pryse	0	15	0
12 yeardes of baggeres graye the pryse	2	0	0
(continued)			
<b>27 yeardes of whitte cotton att</b>			
	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
3 yeardes ¾ of rouge the pryse	0	1	3
4 yeardes of yeallowe cotton the pryse	0	1	6
2 yeardes of blacke cotton the pryse	0	0	8
Some ys	51	17	9

10. Transcribed Inventory of Durham City Draper Thomas Hall 1586

## Artefacts from beneath Elvet Bridge

Medieval artefacts were found in the River Wear from 2008 to 2018 by fire officer, diver and underwater archaeologist, Gary Bankhead. The large collection of sundry items known as the Durham River Wear Assemblage, includes clothing items such as cloth seals, buckles, spindle whorls, pins, bodkins, hooks and eyes, buttons, hem weights, a variety of fasteners and trading tokens. They were all found downstream of Elvet Bridge, Durham City. This is now an underwater archaeology site. This substantial find supports the evidence of cloth, drapery and tailoring trades being undertaken in Durham City during the medieval period and later. On the following pages are four examples of the interesting finds which are associated with the City Drapers.

**Cloth Seals**

Artefact No B.1365



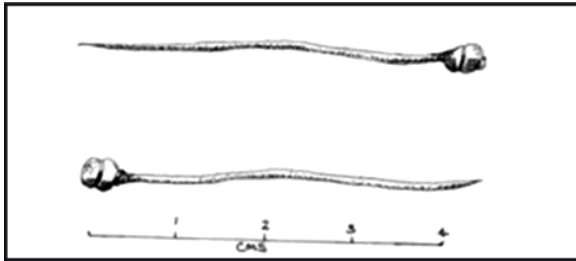
This is an excellent example of a complete two part Post Medieval Lead Seal which was found with a small amount of textile surviving between the discs. This was analysed and classified as fine woven probably worsted cloth with the original colour being red. (Bankhead, 2016 ).



11. Cloth Seal 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Century, No. B1365

## Pins

Artefact No. 2038



12. Pins Artefact No. 2038

**Dimensions:** The length of each is 70mm and the diameter just over 2mm with the head being 5mm in diameter and each weigh 2grams.

These pins which would have been used between the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries; all show signs of use, being bent along the shank.

Analysis of the material indicates an alloy of copper and zinc with traces of iron, nickel and manganese. The condition of the surface, however, shows dark mottling of the copper caused by oxidization.

The method of making was by drawing copper strips through a drawplate of diminishing size holes until the desired thickness was achieved. During this process the wire was annealed several times before straightening, sharpening and cutting,

While the origins of these specific pins cannot be accurately identified, those of high quality were known to have been imported from France during the 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Early English pins were produced, in the main, as a cottage industry and were a very expensive commodity.

This localised manufacture threatened by imports from the continent was subject to royal control. The first factory, a wire mill owned by John Tilsby in Shroud Gloucestershire, began production in 1622 and was the forerunner to England becoming, in the eighteenth century, the world's major pin manufacturer.

Although pins were an essential implement for the making of garments, being an item of general and multiple applications, their use would not be confined to the Drapers or Tailors Guilds. During the 14th to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, pins with decorative heads would also be used to secure clothing during wear. As these pins have simple twisted heads they were most likely to be used for a functional purpose.

### **Jeton (French) (Figure 14)**

Many jetons have been found and documented in the UK and throughout Europe, including many showing this design or with slight variations. Exact dates are uncertain as jetons bore no classifying inscriptions or dates. From references, this jeton, which is not of high quality has been dated to the mid 1400s.

It was made in Tournai, a town in Belgium on the French border which was a centre for cloth trade on the Hanseatic Route of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. Traders would travel between Tournai and the North of England, merchandising raw wool or cloth and exchanging coins and tokens.



## DRAPERS' GUILD

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A jetton is a token or a coin-like medal, with no face value. They are also called ‘casting counters’ – ‘casting’ being the term used for calculating of accounts. They were originally produced as an aid to calculation for ‘accountancy’ purposes, prior to the introduction of Arabic numerals. The use of jetons in abacus arithmetic continued until the introduction of Arabic numerals and the algorismic method of calculation.

From the French, ‘jeter’, ‘to push’ – the tokens were pushed across a board. They were used in ‘sets’, generally of 100 or 50, on a lined board or cloth. The counters were placed on or between the lines to signify the number. When more were added, a jeton would be moved to the next line or space – similar to an abacus.



13. *Jeter - Rechentisch.png image public domain*

The jeton originated in France for use in the Royal Household, probably about 1220. Official jetons were, generally, made of silver, most of which have been melted down. Those that have survived were produced from copper alloy for common usage. There were no restrictions on the design so there are literally hundreds of different variations, relating to their origins and purpose.

**Jeton Obverse and Reverse**

English jetons (which were mostly made in France), were in use from about 1280 but diminished in the 14th century with the introduction of the cheap Tournai and, subsequently, Nuremberg types. Jetons then became widely produced for tokens, souvenirs, attendance payments, medalets, etc. and could be considered to be the forerunner of modern event mementos.



**Obverse:**

*Heater shield containing 3 fleur de lis. Annulets and pellets  
Legend – AVE MARIA GRACIA*



14. Jeton No..... Obverse and Reverse

**Reverse:**

*Triple stranded cross fleury with fleur de lis ends  
Letters AMAM within quadrilobe. Annulets between two pellets  
Size : Diameter 28mm, Thickness: 1.3mm, Weight: 7g.  
Material : Copper alloy with iron, traces of lead, tin and zinc  
Condition: Corroded*

### **Further Reading**

Bankhead, G. (2016) A cultural, scientific and technical study of the Durham Lead Cloth Seal Assemblage. Masters thesis, Durham University.

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Gross, C. (1890), *The Gild Merchant Volume 1, A contribution to British Municipal History*, Oxford, Clarindon Press

Whiting, C. E. (1941), "The Durham Trade Gilds", parts I and II, *Transactions of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland*, 9 part 2

During this research, many websites were accessed, including those of the British Library, the British Museum, The Drapers Company, Merchant Tailors Company and Durham City Freemen.

# DURHAM CITY FREEMEN

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## *DRAPERS' GUILD*

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